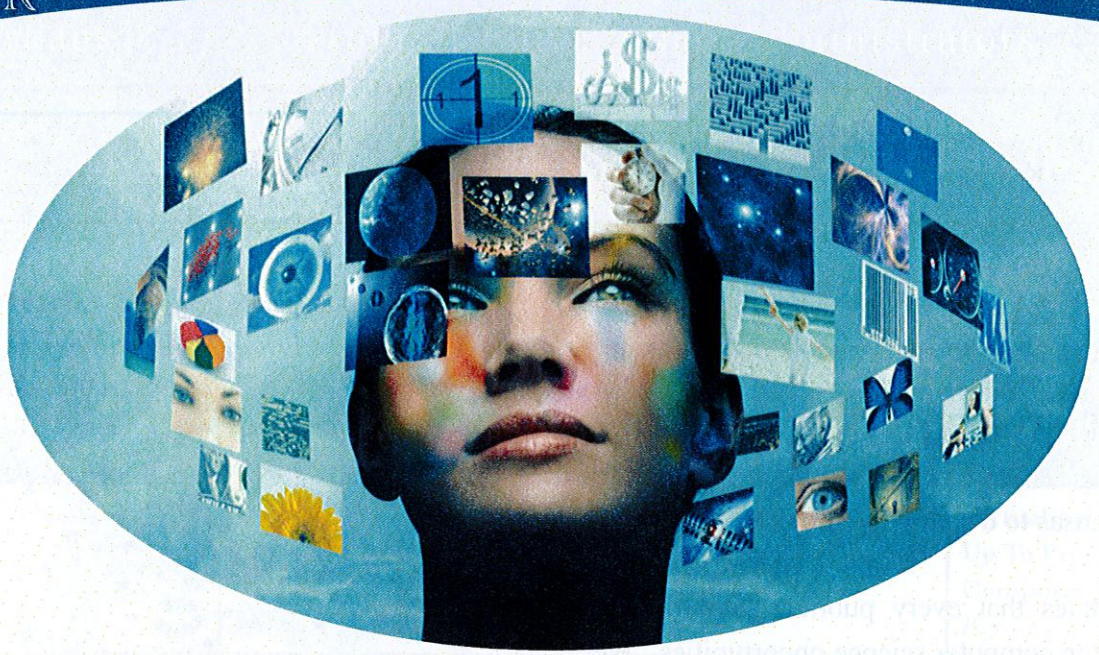
2014 – 2015 Fact Sheet

- 197 Districts have students enrolled in the Full Service courses.
- A total of 29,700 students were registered and enrolled in the Full Service and Content-Only courses for the 2014 – 2015 school year.
- 59 full time teachers reaching students throughout Arkansas.
- 4 Adjunct teachers on staff.
- All teachers are licensed and Highly Qualified in the content areas they teach.
- 29 Districts used the Virtual Arkansas Content-Only courses to satisfy Act 1280.
- 5,308 students are enrolled in the Content-Only Virtual Arkansas courses.
- 77 local teachers are teaching students in their districts using the Virtual Arkansas Content-Only courses.
- 73 Sections of Civics, Economics, Health and Wellness, Personal Finance, and Physical Science are being taught during the fall 2014 semester in the Content-Only option.
- 12 Districts are using the Alternative Education Content-Only courses.
- A total of 954 students are enrolled in the Alternative Education Content-Only courses.



Virtual Arkansas POWERS UP to Provide new Computer Science Courses

By: Cathi Swan, State Coordinator of Digital Learning

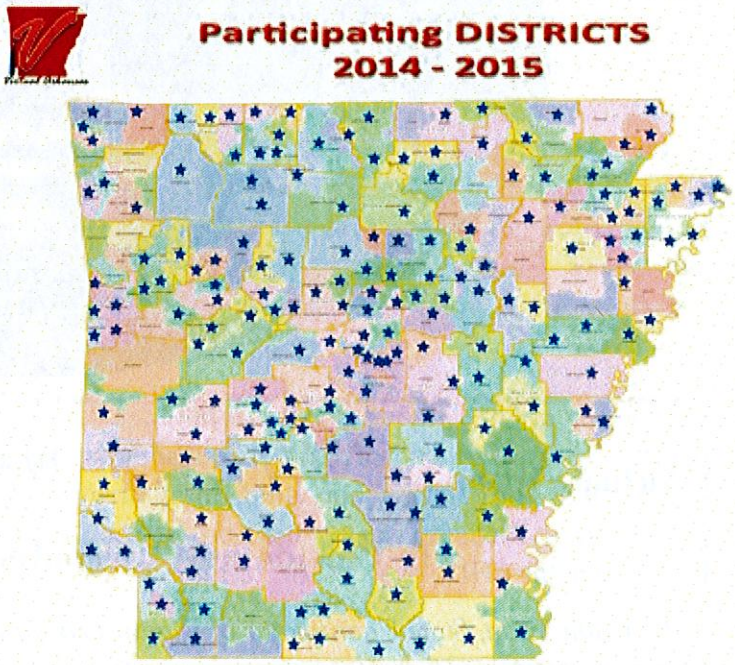
Virtual Arkansas is powering up to provide digital versions of Essentials of Computer Programming, Computer Science with Mathematics, and AP Computer Science courses. The courses will be provided in two delivery options: 1) the Full Services option, which provides the instructing teacher with the online course content; and, 2) the Content Only option, which provides the online course content used by the local teacher. Our courses are designed to provide the student with some element of control over the time, place, path or pace of their learning. Schools will be able to count these computer science courses as a student's digital learning requirement.

We are excited about the new course offerings. We are especially excited about the Essentials of Computer Programming course. It is offered to 9-12th graders with no prerequisites. This course will appeal to any student that has the slight interest in computer science applications regardless of if they have had upper level math courses. We are challenged to design a course that provides them with introduction and experience into topics such as computer coding, computer programming, web design, working with data, addressing real-world problems on the computer, and others. This course will be developed as student-led, project-based course. Each module will lead the student on an independent learning journey, a guided learning journey, a peer-learning journey, and end in a collaborative project. Each module will place the student in a scenario to analyze and apply ethical, regulatory, privacy, and security strategies. We have enlisted students on this development team to make sure that we keep

Virtual Arkansas POWERS UP, continued

this course relevant and fun for them. They will determine the projects that appeal most to them. Students will have voice and choice in assignments, and projects. Students will work with various computer science industry leaders across Arkansas to develop the projects.

The law states that every public school district must offer the computer science opportunities. We anticipate an interest in these courses by students and will monitor our registration from April to August and make staffing adjustments as the numbers dictate. Just like every other entity in education, the two resources that are a challenge to us are time and money. We have a dedicated staff that is passionate about digital learning and students. We have support from the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives, and our member schools that is invaluable as we take on new services. Arkansas is fortunate to have a new six-member team of digital learning support specialists called Team Digital. These specialists are well versed in course design, web accessibility, copyright, and multi-tasking. Team Digital's main mission is to assist schools that are interested in implementing innovative new digital learning environments. The Team also supports Virtual Arkansas and Arkansas MOODLE projects for the State. Team Digital will be instrumental in helping Virtual Arkansas implement the new computer science courses. We are accustomed to course development, course design, interactive activity building, designing student pathways, training online instructors, and providing these services.



Virtual Arkansas serves a student enrollment of over 30,000 for 2014-2015 to 200 school districts. We provide core courses, concurrent credit courses, and Career and Technical Education courses to traditional brick-and-mortar students, Alternative Education students, and public school students accessing from off-campus. A list of our courses may be found at http://virtualarkansas.org/docs/2015-16_va_course_catalog_022715.pdf.

Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

March 2015

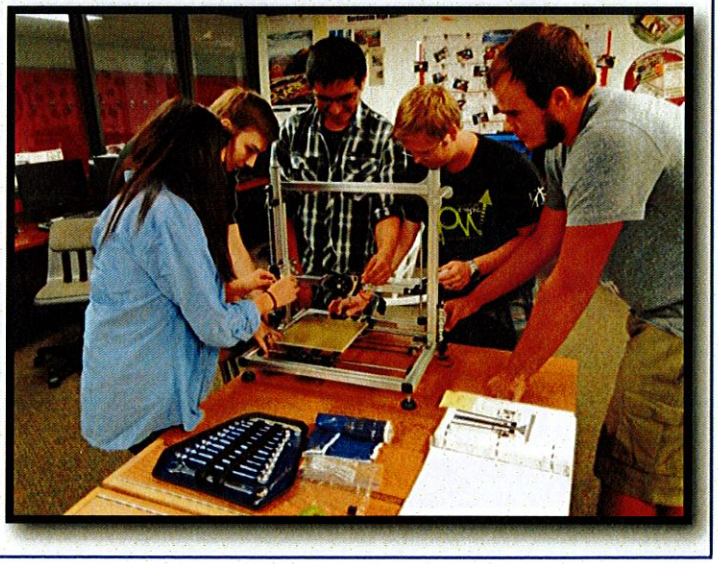
Lights on After School: Continuing Learning Beyond the School Day

By: Jamie Burris, NBCT, Ed. S, Instructional Supervisor, Federal Programs Director, Dardanelle Public Schools

Like high school Seniors all over America, many Dardanelle High School students recently took the ACT test in hopes of college admissions and scholarships. However, unlike students in most schools, DHS students had the advantage of a free ACT prep course to help them prepare.

The course was possible because D.H.S. is a designated Arkansas 21st Century Community Learning Center which comes with a grant from the Arkansas Dept. of Education. The grants are supported through the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Dardanelle's grant is for a total of $660,000 to be used over a 5-year period. According to the grant, centers "must provide students in high poverty schools with intensive academic enrichment opportunities along with other activities designed to complement the students' regular academic program."

Dardanelle High School is beginning a new 5-year cycle within the grant and Dardanelle Middle School is in the first year of operation. Both campuses offer after school programs including providing tutorial services, extended library hours and a broad array of programs to meet the needs of the students such as math and science activities, arts and music, recreation, technology, literacy, language acquisition, photography, theater, and video broadcasting, and more. On any given afternoon one can find DHS students cooking, painting, playing an instrument, discussing a kindle book, using the library computers



Lights on After School, continued

for research, learning videography, enjoying a "got talent" competition, or participating in any other number of enriching activities

Dardanelle High consistently has some of the top scores in the state. The percentages of students who are proficient or advanced this past year were: Geometry 98%; Algebra 99%; Literacy 79% and Biology 84%. Last year DHS added the credit recovery program as well and nearly 50 Dardanelle High School students earned credit in English, Math, World History, or Chemistry.

The Dardanelle Middle and High School after-school program continues to provide support for students by extending the school day. Through this approach, students have opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to be successful both during the school day and in the future. It is the desire of the program to utilize the after-school hours to provide a safe, fun, and exciting place for students to be every afternoon. Through programs of this nature, Dardanelle is working to make a difference in the lives of all students!

Rachel's Challenge

By: Audrey Chandler, Principal, Spring Hill Elementary School

Back in June 2014, I was honored to attend Rachel's Challenge in Colorado to get ideas on addressing bullying issues or problems. Rachel's Challenge is not about bullying it's about kindness.

Rachel's Challenge is a national non-profit organization dedicated to creating safe, connected school environments where learning and teaching are maximized. Based on the life and writing of Rachel Scott, the first victim of the Columbine tragedy in 1999, Rachel's Challenge provides a continuous improvement process designed to awaken the learner in every child. We motivate and equip students to start and sustain a chain reaction of kindness and compassion that transforms schools and communities.

Rachel's parents have honored her legacy by teaching about kindness. Rachel was known for her random acts of kindness because she wanted to make a difference. A month or two before she was killed she traced her hands and wrote, "I am Rachel Scott and these hands will make a difference and touch the lives of many people." Wow! She did make a difference and is continuing to make a difference all over the world! My theme this year at Spring Hill Elementary School is: Attitude of Gratitude: With A Chain Reaction of Kindness." Since the start of school, I've been promoting acts of kindness throughout our school and it's amazing what my students are doing. Every time they do random acts of kindness they get to add a loop to our chain. They love this! Some of their acts of kindness include: helping a new student, picking up trash, being polite by using their manners and cleaning up the cafeteria. We've even got our parents, school board members and community involved in our chain reaction of kindness! ***Our goal is to have a five mile chain by the end of the school year but more importantly our goal is to teach our children that random acts of kindness do make a difference!***

AWAKEN THE LEARNER

Finding the Source of Effective Education

From the Rachel's Challenge Web Site:

http://www.rachelschallenge.org/educators/

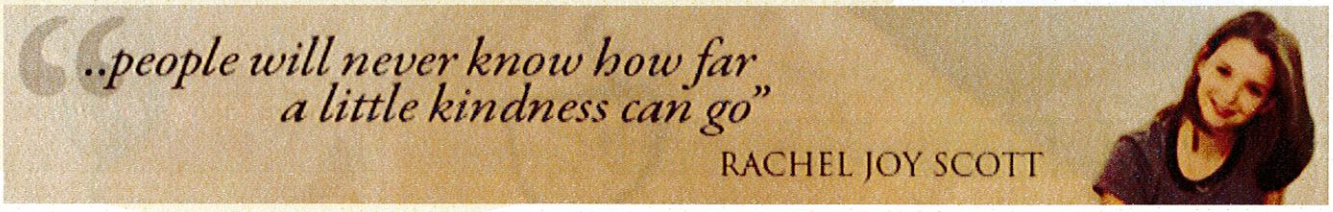
Teachers, school counselors and education administrators rank among the most important professionals who will determine the future of our civilization. As cultures change more rapidly and dramatically than ever before, those who educate children are responsibly for training those entrusted with the well-being of future generations. Rachel's Challenge regards today's educators with the highest possible regard. We believe that there are lessons to be learned from the life of Rachel Scott that can help educators and improve the quality of education.

Education today is the product of decades of changing philosophy that drives classroom practices. The Rachel's Challenge philosophy of education is based on a historically sound principle of the "three H's," the heart, the head and the hands. We believe that the doorway to improving education is a student's heart. If a teacher captures a student's heart (emotion, passion and imagination), the student will give you the opportunity to train their mind (head) which will lead to the student applying their hands to meaningful work and service.

This philosophy was prevalent in American education through the 1960's when American students ranked at or near the top of every international measurement of educational success.

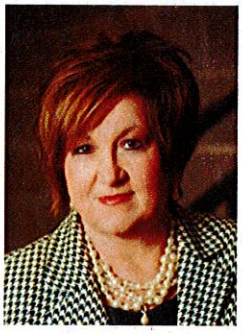
Rachel's Challenge applies this philosophy in its student focused programs, and in a series of educator training opportunities. Many of these sessions earn post-graduate credits through Brandman University. Whether you attend a Rachel's Challenge event, invite Rachel's Challenge to your campus or access these training opportunities online, your teaching experience can be propelled to new heights by applying this simple, proven philosophy to your educational setting.

START A CHAIN REACTION



Let's Innovate and Transform

Instead of Wait and Conform



By: Alene Bynum, Assistant Superintendent, Russellville School District

It is recognized that there is an increasing need for school districts to be innovative in the classroom. In order to enable greater creativity that requires learner input and problem solving, school districts may need to be innovative in order to deliver a more personalized educational system that fosters new skills that will prepare students for college and career.

The State of Arkansas has a provision for school districts to initiate, innovate and transform new ways of conducting school. School districts can apply to be a School of Innovation. A School of Innovation is a school that participates to transform and improve teaching and learning through new or creative alternatives to the existing instructional and administrative practices that are intended to improve academic performance. To qualify, school districts have to develop a School of Innovation plan, obtain necessary exceptions from laws, rules, and local policies, and be approved as a district of innovation by the Commissioner of Education.

After filing an application to the Arkansas Department of Education and receiving approval to become a School of Innovation, a district can receive a four-year waiver for needed changes to the Standards of Accreditation. The proposed Innovative and Transformative School of Innovation will include how:

- the environment should be personalized to fit the unique needs of the learner in that district/school
- the technology resources will revolve around the needs of the new environment
- the district will finance, implement, and provide sustaining resources for the innovative idea
- the learners will be able to take ownership and partnership in their learning
- the district will increase student participation in curriculum options,
- students will be allowed to explore new avenues of learning through the innovative learning environment
- the learning culture and environment will be transformed as a result of changing the way learning occurs
- the learning will better prepare students for college and career, and
- the learning will increase all learners knowledge and skills

Schools of Innovation may include alternatives to Carnegie units and seat-time, blended/online learning opportunities, changes in required coursework to meet state standards, and other changes that require a waiver from the state. The district must also be able to monitor the innovative and transformative school and measure the impact on student learning.

continued on next page

Innovate and Transform, continued

During the 2013-2014 school year, Russellville Junior High School (RJHS) was one of six schools in the state to be named a School of Innovation with the expansion of its STEM program by the Arkansas Department of Education for the next four years. RJHS focused their plan on enhancing the STEM initiative to students in the eighth-grade because many students could not fit classes such as Design and Modeling, Magic of Electrons, Science of Technology, EAST and Robotics into their already filled schedule with required coursework in physical education, music, art, and career education. As a result, only three sections of engineering/STEM classes were offered to students for the 2013-2014 school year. In order to increase engineering curricular offerings in student schedules, a waiver had to be secured to allow room in student schedules.

After receiving notification from the Commissioner of Education that RJHS's application to be a School of Innovation was approved, the incoming eighth grade students for the 2014-2015 school year were notified that they could take the STEM classes of their choice. By providing flexibility and waivers from Standards of Accreditation rules and regs regarding physical education, art, music, and career orientation, enrollment increased from 60 students to 180 students in STEM/engineering classes. Next year, RJHS intends to add Career Medical Detectives to the STEM program.

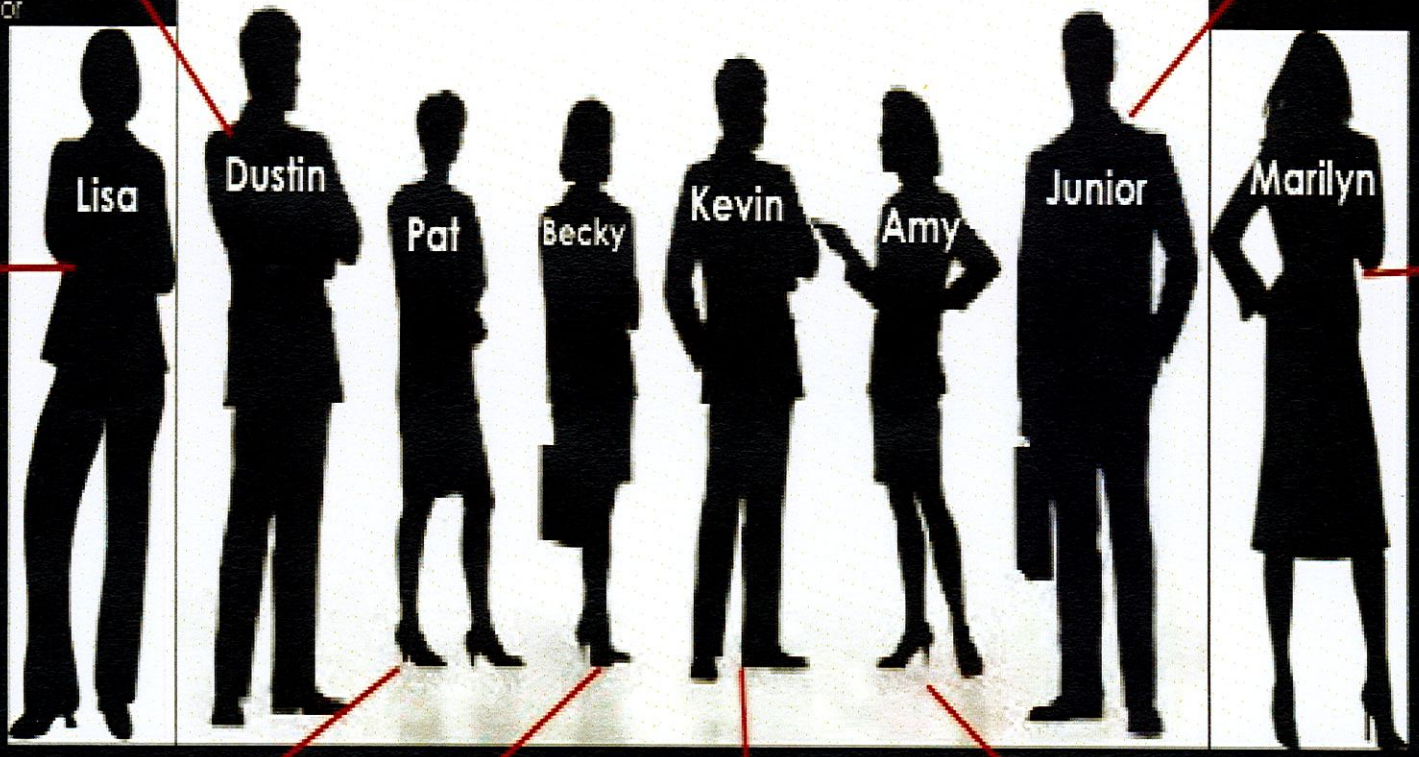
Students love the innovative schedule and STEM classes that they are enrolled in. An 8th grade Design and Modeling student stated, "In Design and Modeling class, we learn to draw and get different isometric and orthographic views using Auto Desk." Another 8th grade student in Robotics class said, "I like Robotics the best because I naturally like to build things." An 8th grade female student stated, "Robotics is going very well. I really enjoy learning about gear ratios and gear trains. I love building because it is so hands on."

Schools of Innovation are an opportunity to create a unique learning environment that meets the needs of the students in your district. It is great to be in a state that acknowledges, promotes, and approves of schools and districts who do not want to wait and conform, but want to create and transform learning environments that meet the college and career readiness of its students.

The Arkansas State Board of Education promulgated rules pursuant to Act 601 of 2013 and Ark. Code Annotated and§§ 6-11-105 et seq. and 25-15-201 et seq.

SCHOOL OF INNOVATION

Content Development Team



- M.S.E. Educational Technology
- 4 years instructional designer
- 6 years EAST facilitator
- 3 years university computer science instructor

- self-taught code developer
- 6 years computer business proprietor
- 14 years technology director for K12

- M.B.A. Computer Information Systems
- 10 years district technology coordinator
- 5 years university computer science instructor

- M.S.A. Computer Resource Information Systems
- 8 years teaching computer science
- 5 years ADE Programmer
- 12 years Industry programmer

- B.S. Computer Programming
- M.S.E. Secondary Mathematics
- 2 years Junior High and Algebra
- 13 years Algebra I and II, Geometry, and Pre-Calculus.

- M.S.E Business Education
- 8 years Business Teacher
- 12 years university coding instructor

- B.S. Mathematics with Minor in CS
- 4 years 7-12 Mathematics
- 2 years Algebra I

- B.S. Computer Information Systems
- M.S.E. Information Technology
- 2 years university networking and introduction to computer science instructor
- 2 years 9-12 Environmental Science, Biology and ACT Prep
- 9 years database administration in industry
- 2 years supervisor for technical support in industry